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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Food Habits (Canteens, Restaurants, Cafes): Clientele/
Identity Checks / Tipping / Prices

50X1-HUM

DATE DISTR. *3 May* 1954

NO. OF PAGES *4*

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO

REPORT NO.

50X1-HUM

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2. "There is no rationing of food in Poland. Everybody is free to buy whatever food he wants in any shop. The real limitations are price and the variety and quality of the foods in stock. The only shops with limited clientele are the Konsumy, which cater to Army and UB personnel and high Communist officials.

Canteens

3. "In consequence, there are also no restrictions on eating in public restaurants. The exception are restaurants and canteens run by state offices or establishments for their personnel.
4. "The system of eating in these canteens varies slightly with the enterprise, but the principle is the same: the employees or workers who wish to eat meals in the canteen, buy special coupons called Bloczki, to last a week or a month. Usually someone from the personnel office (Wydział Kadr) goes all over the enterprise collecting signatures on a list. This list must be approved by the chief of the personnel office, because a certain part of the cost of the meals is borne by the enterprise. This is why meals in canteens are cheaper than elsewhere. Depending on the category of the establishment or enterprise, they cost between three and seven zlotys each. In important offices, the canteens resemble elegant restaurants. Workers' canteens in factories are of course quite modest. Also depending on the category of the enterprise, the food is either taken by the consumers themselves from a little window leading to the kitchen, or served by waiters.
5. "The same system as in factories and offices, exists also in high schools and universities, because these institutions are also considered 'working establishments' (Zaklad Pracy).

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6. "In principle the right to eat in such canteens is limited to the personnel of the respective enterprise. In practice this is not rigid. The wife of an ill worker, who has bought his Bloczki for meals, may come to the canteen and ask permission to eat the lunch in her husband's place. The canteen management lets her do this without difficulties. The rules are rigid if the enterprise or office is out of bounds to all outsiders for 'official secret' reasons; no one but the personnel may eat in those canteens. This is true of the Polish Fire Service, where it is clearly stated that the canteen is 'for Service personnel only'; the whole premises are restricted.
7. "The quality of the meals served in the canteens depends on the category of the enterprise. It may be said generally that most canteens receive often spoiled food products; cases of food poisoning among employees and workers are comparatively frequent. Most factory canteens are run without hygienic storage facilities.

Tipping

8. "If waiters serve meals in office or factory canteens, it is not the habit to give them tips.
9. "In public restaurants the tipping habit is sternly discouraged by the Communists, but it takes long to die. Many people tip the waiters to get better service, but they do it on the sly. [redacted]

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Cafes and Restaurants

10. "Professional and artistic circles no longer gather in a favorite cafe or restaurant but in a club. For instance, the artists in larger towns have Artists' Homes in which cafes operate. It is the same with writers and journalists. The pre-World War II type of cafe which was frequented by painters, writers or actors, and in which one often saw famous persons sitting at another table, has now disappeared. The members of professional clubs may introduce guests to their cafes, but the general public does not enter.
11. "The most expensive, luxurious cafes and restaurants are frequented primarily by high state officials, UB officers, army officers and speculators. Ordinary people rarely enter there, if only because they cannot afford the prices. If they do go, it is usually because they have some definite business to settle with somebody who wishes to meet them in that particular cafe. But all the time they feel uneasy, since they know that all patrons are under observation. Many of the waiters are UB agents, and as a rule all barmen are on the UB payroll.

Document Checks

12. "Controls by the police in restaurants do happen quite frequently. But it must be remembered that unless the UB men come with a definite purpose of arresting someone, they never divulge their official standing; they always state that they are representatives of some other institution, sometimes quite fictitious: 'Price control' board or such like. This is because UB men have no right to present themselves as UB unless they make an arrest. If they tell people they come from the UB, they may get five years in prison.
13. [redacted] a control in a restaurant in Gdansk. Three plain-clothes men entered the room. One of the waiters, probably their man, posted himself at the door. The three men approached one table after another, saying that they were 'from the Trade Union' and asking for identity papers. The control was thus presented as a check-up on absenteeism. Such subterfuges are childish because everybody knows that it is the UB.

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14. "If the UB inspectors find in a restaurant a person who should not be there, this person usually gets a 'warning' letter through the proper channels. If they find a client in the restaurant with no identity papers on him, they arrest him and take him to the police station. If he has left his documents at home, he is kept at the station until the UB men have gone to his home and found the documents or gotten them from his family. Then he is usually released with a proper warning not to be so careless in the future. But it is absolutely impossible for a man to be arrested and then released if he has compromising documents on his person. A personal search is carried out as a matter of course, when a person is brought to a police station, if he has something compromising in his pocket, he has 'had it'.

15. Watch Checks

"There is another kind of police control in restaurants: inspection of watches. Sometimes a person wearing a foreign watch on his wrist is approached by someone who wants to have a look at the watch and then asks for a certificate showing that it has been cleared by the customs. If the person has no such certificate - the watch is confiscated on the spot.

Restaurant Prices

16. "Medium category restaurant on the Polish coast: Zlotys
 Beefsteak, potatoes, onions 10
 Portion of goose, with trimmings 20
17. "Cheap restaurant:
 Dinner for three: a herring, a meat dish, a dessert and three drinks 100
18. "First-class restaurant in Sopoty (from a menu card):
- | | | |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| Hors d'oeuvres: | Herring in oil | 1.35 |
| | Fish salad | 5.05 |
| | Eggs in Tartare Sauce | 2.05 |
| | Eggs Mayonnaise | 2.50 |
| | One tomato | 1.00 |
| | A roll with butter | 1.40 |
| Soups: | Clear beetroot soup | 1.20 |
| | Cabbage soup | 2.65 |
| | Cauliflower soup with croutons | 3.60 |
| Entrees: | Roast ribs with cabbage and potatoes | 7.65 |
| | Roast veal, two vegetables | 7.95 |
| | Stuffed veal brains, French beans | 7.85 |
| | Roast beef, two vegetables | 9.40 |
| | Half spring chicken roasted, cucumber salad | 20.15 |
| Fish: | Salmon grille, Tartare Sauce | 22.60 |
| | Salmon saute in butter | 20.65 |
| | Pike saute in butter | 11.75 |
| Vegetables: | Pike pane with carrots | 12.65 |
| | Fried sole with cucumber salad, potatoes | 7.25 |

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	Zlotys
Vegetarian: Baked macaroni with cabbage	3.00
Fried eggs on tomatoes, potatoes	8.65
Scrambled eggs, potatoes	6.50
Pancakes with cheese	4.15
Cauliflower with butter	9.15
French beans with butter	3.70
Carrots and potatoes	2.80
Tomatoes saute	2.00
Omelette with tomatoes	7.05
Omelette with cauliflower	9.65
Vegetables: Cabbage	1.30
Carrots	1.90
Beetroots	1.60
Cucumber salad with vinegar and oil	0.65
Desserts: Omelette with berries	9.15
Plain omelette	5.05
Omelette with jam	7.05

If the band is playing, 15% is added to the charge.

19. "Restaurant in the Grand Hotel of Sopoty:

Portion of eel	15.00
Herring in oil	8.00
Portion of ham	15.00
Liter of cherry brandy	120.00
Liter of 'bitter' vodka	160.00
Liter of best 'export' vodka	200.00
Carp, cream sauce	20.00
Pork outlet	20.00
Liver, two vegetables	20.00
Portion of chicken	25.00
Fruit salad	5.00
Ice cream portion (small)	2.00
A cup of beetroot soup (served late at night after many drinks)"	2.00"

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